



LI Group To Seek Homeland Defense Funds

By James Bernstein
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Long Island political and business leaders today announced the formation of a partnership of companies and organizations to boost efforts to capture highly sought after homeland defense funds.

Rep. Steve Israel (D-Dix Hills) a member of the House Armed Services committee and a leader in the effort to establish the partnership, said the effort will be headed by two former Long Island members of congress -- Democrat George Hochbrueckner and Republican Felix Grucci.

At a press conference at the LI Business and Technology Center in Great River, Israel said Long Island companies, educational institutions and organizations would be using their skills in electronics, software, and biotechnology to secure contracts from the recently-formed federal Department of Homeland Security.

"For much of the 20th century, Long Island's technology visionaries and entrepreneurs, its research infrastructure and skilled workforce have combined to create advanced science and technology," Israel said. "As we've begun the 21st century we need them once again because of new threats to our nation, and for the first time in almost two centuries, threats to our very homeland."

Israel was joined by Rep. Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) in announcing the initiative.

"Long Island's homeland security industry does not just benefit one congressional district or one company," Bishop said. "It is an integrated, far-reaching enterprise which brings all of us together to make our towns safer and to insure jobs for residents of our community."

Israel said that in addition to considering a \$400-billion defense budget for fiscal 2004, Congress is also considering \$50-billion for homeland security.

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